MORAL AND ETHICAL CONDUCT OF A BUDDHIST
by
Ven Dr K Sri Dhammananda

Introduction

The world has never experienced such phenomenal material progress as it is realising in this age. However, despite this wonderful progress, it is most unfortunate that mankind tends to neglect its spiritual well-being. Mankind appears to have been blinded by material achievements thinking that materialism is the end of all things. Mankind has forgotten that materialism alone does not provide the true happiness or spiritual well-being sought after by mankind. Men must seek true happiness and spiritual well-being through their respective religions as an additional adjunct to materialism. Spiritual solace and materialism go hand in hand to provide true happiness for all.

Moral degradation exists everywhere. With increased efficiency of modern mass communications, we have become much more aware of man's inhumanity to man on a scale unheard of hitherto. Individuals tend to forget or completely ignore their obligations and duties to the society in which they live. Business organisations, in their ruthless scramble for profits and material gain, are pursuing their efforts without any sense of decency. They have forgotten that there is such a thing as human dignity. In the light of such a catastrophic situation, many people concerned with the upholding of human dignity and ethical practises, are tempted to throw up their hands in sheer despair of ever finding a solution to curb man's inordinate greed and to steer him along the path of human decency coupled with spiritual solace. Man has conquered space; man is even trying to elevate himself to a super being, but man has not been capable of conducting himself as a decent human being with spiritual love and compassion for others.

The sad state of affairs prevails today because man has chosen to take the wrong path in developing modern civilization. Man has defined materialism in the mistaken belief that materialism alone can bring happiness. This is a fallacy. Man has gone wrong because he has willfully chosen to ignore the invaluable advice given by our spiritual leaders over the centuries. Whilst it is admitted that science can produce quick results and a measure of material gain, the resultant benefits from such material gain are illusory and short-lived. As against such illusory and short-lived gains, the benefits that we derive by following the noble teachings of our noble religious leaders are those of real lasting happiness and not illusory. Material gain without spiritual solace does not provide true and lasting happiness. Spiritual backing is absolutely necessary for man's spiritual upliftment, leading to tranquility of mind and everlasting happiness.

If we study world history concerning man's behaviour in the past, we will readily agree that modern man's moral conduct is not better than that of his ancestors although we pretend to glorify our civilization.

Some modern thinkers are of the opinion that evil is a natural part of man's make-up and trying to make him good and pure is simply an impractical and futile task. They point to the terrifying evil actions of murder, violence, rape, pillage carried out by all types of people. They argue that in spite of efforts to "civilize" man, we have continued to witness the horrors of persecution in almost every country. Sometimes, we wonder how the small element of goodness has prevailed for so long in the face of so much evil.

While some thinkers are giving up hope of ever improving the human race, religious people have a completely different point of view. They talk about kings like

Charlemagne, Asoka and Akbar whose deep understanding of religion has helped them to do so much good for mankind. Buddhism accepts that there is evil in man, but it teaches that this evil can be eradicated by understanding and determination. Because people, especially government leaders and educationists, fail to understand the true nature of life, they do not attempt to teach their young the right values. In this century, education is based on the Darwinian concept of the survival of the fittest and of course this philosophy tends to lead the young to be suspicious, greedy, aggressive and self-seeking. In a lovely book "Island" by Aldous Huxley we are shown that there *is* an alternative to the present education system where we are shown that survival is not guaranteed by selfishness but by sharing and giving. Our modern education system which aims at the material progress is responsible for the turning of the young to be aggressive and self-seeking. What we urgently need today is a code of ethics and morality which will guide people not to blindly seek material progress alone but to look for spiritual enlightenment, not just for self aggrandisement but for the common weal.

Buddhism teaches man to live in peace and harmony. The Buddha exhorted His followers not to take His Teachings on blind faith but to accept them only after close investigation and inquiry as to whether the Teachings are really acceptable according to one's own intelligence and experience. Even though Buddha wanted His followers to absorb the Dhamma, He did not want them to accept it without clarity of mind and complete understanding.

The Buddha wanted all human beings to lead ideal lives – to be kind, compassionate and considerate to one another and to exercise patience, tolerance and understanding in all activities and relationships. The Buddha, with His supreme wisdom, realised that there were weaknesses and pit-falls in human society. He introduced the Buddha Dhamma in order to enlighten, emancipate and reform mankind to lead a meaningful life. His Teachings were clear and comprehensive – they covered the existence of a human being, from birth to the grave. Those who were unable to comprehend His Teachings or were not prepared to accept His Teachings, would rate His Teachings as too idealistic and incapable of achievement. Despite such assertions, His Teachings, if reduced to the simplest of terms, could be contained in just a few words: "DO GOOD, SHUN EVIL AND PURIFY THE MIND". These words were true during the Buddha's time. These words are just as true and applicable for the present and the future. If everyone does what is good for oneself and for others as well and completely shuns evil, that would affect others as well as oneself and the world would definitely be a better place to live in. Buddhist Teachings are designed to enable men and women to achieve fulfillment and satisfaction in this life through their own sustained efforts and to encourage them to create a social order conducive to the benefit and welfare of all mankind. It develops unselfish moral codes, generosity, concern and a spirit of real discipline for the good and well being of relations, friends and acquaintances.

Human Failings

Human failings, such as ego, greed, envy, enmity and hate that prevailed from time immemorial, have remained unchanged even to the present time. The Buddha's enlightenment is such that His spiritual injunctions, particularly the Five Precepts and the Noble Eight-fold path, are prescriptions to eradicate these human weaknesses which cause pain and harm to others. The immortal observation of the Buddha that "Hatred can never be eradicated by Hatred but only through love and compassion", is a valid statement that has gone unchallenged throughout the ages. The perennial problems that beset human beings are due to our inability to subdue our emotions like hatred and to replace them with love and compassion. In practically every aspect of our lives, in family

circles, in society, in communal, national and even international affairs, we find the ugly word “hatred” looming large in our vocabulary and in our dealings with one another. The father hates the child disobedience, the child hates the parents for not providing what he considers are his essential needs. In society, a person would show hate to another person because of the feeling, rightly or wrongly, that the particular person was a stumbling block to one’s aspiration and so on. In national and international relationships, one country would express hate for another country because of certain action against it. The hatred goes on. It leads to reprisals and in many instances, may even lead to war causing untold misery and destruction in lives and property. Such a state of affairs would not arise in Buddha’s Noble Eight-fold Path or the middle path is projected into all our day-to-day human relationships, together with the exercise of Patience, Tolerance and Understanding. It will be observed that the word “Right” is contained in all the eight injunctions. Hence, if we follow the Eight-fold Path, it will be the right path that we are taking to achieve peace and tranquility.

The Eight-fold Path is :-

Right Understanding
Right Thought
Right Livelihood
Right Effort
Right Speech
Right Action
Right Mindfulness
Right Concentration

Closely associated with the Noble Eight-fold Path, are the Five Precepts which are normally observed by all the Buddhist devotees in any religious meeting. They are:-

a) To abstain from killing
b) To abstain from stealing
c) To abstain from adultery
d) To abstain from lying and loose speech
e) To abstain from intoxicants and drugs

These precepts are simple in their presentation and are likely, at times, to be taken for granted by devotees, without giving deep thought to the serious impact on our daily lives and to the peace and harmony of our society and country.

When these precepts were enunciated by the Buddha, He had in mind the unsettled conditions of society prevailing twenty-five centuries ago in India. These conditions were caused by human failings such as anger which leads to killing, greed which leads to stealing, undue sexual impulses that lead to adultery, egoistic feelings that lead to telling falsehoods and the absence of self-control that leads to undue consumption of intoxicants or drugs. These issues are so vital to the peaceful co-existence of our human race, that every follower of Buddhism is requested to repeat these precepts, again and again as a daily habit to stay clear from the five evils that would cause pain and harm to anyone who fails to follow the precepts. These are norms for a good society.

As human beings, we all value our lives, hence we should refrain from taking the lives of other beings. At times we may be subjected to very grave provocation, but despite whatever tribulations may be poured on us, we should maintain our cool and never allow our emotions, particularly anger, to get the better of us. Angry emotions can lead to

deadly action. By instilling the noble spirit of love and compassion in our hearts, we should be able to maintain the precept to abstain from killing – to abstain from taking lives of other beings.

One of the codes of a harmonious human society as taught by the Buddha and as contained in the second precept, is to refrain from stealing. In our human society, each of us has to work to earn our living. With the money that we earn, we buy the necessities of life for our sustenance. We treasure these necessities because we obtained them through our own sweat and labour. We can part with them, if necessary, to help others in need, but we certainly would strongly object if our requirements were forcibly taken away from us through thieving or other means. Just as we do not like others to steal our possessions, we should all adopt the precept to "refrain from stealing" under any circumstances.

From the past to the present day, many happy families have been broken up or disrupted due to man's inordinate sexual desires. Man should control his animal passions and behave in a decent and ethical manner. Hence the Buddha enjoined all human beings to refrain from committing adultery. All of us expect our family ties to be respected, hence we should all uphold this particular precept.

One of the most difficult precepts to follow in this modern era, is the precept to abstain from lying or telling falsehoods. For fear of punishment, a child would at once deny that is has committed a misdeed. In a court of law, a witness would be prepared to tell a deliberate lie in order to save a friend or a relative. However, lying is an obnoxious deed, particularly if a person were to create deliberate lies in order to put someone in trouble. Another very distasteful act of lying is to slander by spreading unfounded lies in order to smear the good name of another person. The Buddha has enjoined us as good Buddhists to refrain from telling lies. We should uphold the truth. We should honour this precept and refrain from indulging in falsehoods.

Many good families have been broken and upset through the inordinate use of intoxicants and drugs. Intoxicants or drugs have the effect of lulling the consumer into a state of false happiness. A drunkard loses his self-control and does not realise what he is doing. He becomes boisterous and is prepared to challenge everybody to a scuffle. A drunkard often loses his self respect. Under the influence of liquor, a drunkard would do things which he would normally do if he is sober. The drug addict is also a curse to the society. Many crimes in the country are caused by drug addicts. Today, rehabilitation of drug addicts is costing the government millions of hard-earned dollars which could have been utilised for better and more worthwhile projects. We should all observe the precept to refrain from taking liquor and drugs.

In the Five Precepts and the Noble Eight-fold Path the Buddha gave us spiritual guidelines on how to conduct a decent Buddhist way of life. However these guide-lines by themselves are incomplete. To these guide-lines must be added the other important injunctions of the Buddha to do good, to radiate compassion and to practise loving kindness. This is most essential. The practise of radiating compassion and loving kindness is the very essence of the Buddhist Teachings or way of life. It is a positive quality of the enlightened mind which promotes a healthy ethical attitude. A person who extends to his fellow beings the love and affection similar to that extended by a mother to her only child and says with sincerity and feeling "May all beings be well and happy", finds no place in his mind for malice, hate, jealousy and envy. By the practise of loving kindness, he becomes incapable of indulging in killing, stealing, lying, slandering or using harsh and unseemly language. Not only does he avoid doing harm to others

whether by deed, word or thought, but he also develops the tendency to do good, to be kind and compassionate and to engage himself in the task of relieving others of suffering and agony. A good Buddhist is not merely a harmless and innocent person who minds his own business and leads a happy life. Where necessary, he should go all out to make his neighbors happy, to help them in time of difficulty, to care for the sick and the old and to look after the welfare of the poor and the destitute. Charity should be his foremost obligation. He, that radiates compassion and loving kindness, leads a sublime life free from malice and jealousy. He is generous in his gifts, he speaks pleasant words, he works for the welfare of others and he treats everyone as his equal. Such a person is indeed an ideal Buddhist.

What has been described so far is but a very brief summary of the fundamental obligations of a lay Buddhist. In His many discourses spread over a period of forty-five years, the Buddha has dealt with various aspects of man's social life including the concept of marriage and family life, and the ethical standards to be maintained by a Buddhist in society.

Marriage

A society grows through a network of relationships which are mutually inter-twined and inter-dependent. Every relationship is a whole-heated commitment to support and to protect others in a group or community. Marriage plays a very important part in this strong web of relationships of giving support and protection. A good marriage should grow and develop gradually from understanding and not impulse, from true loyalty and not just sheer indulgence. The institution of marriage provides a fine basis for the development of culture, a delightful association of two individuals to be nurtured and to be free from loneliness, deprivation and fear. In marriage, each partner develops a complimentary role, giving strength and moral courage to one another, each manifesting a supportive and appreciative recognition of the other's skills. There must be no thought of either man or woman being superior – each is complimentary to the other, a partnership of equality, exuding gentleness, generosity, calm and dedication.

The Buddha, in reply to a householder as to how a husband should minister to his wife, declared that the husband should always honour and respect his wife by being faithful to her, by giving her the requisite authority to manage domestic affairs and by giving her befitting ornaments. This advice, given over twenty five centuries ago, stands good for today. Knowing the psychology of the man who tends to consider himself superior, the Buddha made a remarkable change and uplifted the status of a woman by a simple suggestion that a husband should honour and respect the wife. The suggestion that a husband should be faithful to his wife, would mean that a husband should fulfill and maintain his marital obligations to his wife, thus sustaining the confidence in the marital relationship in every sense of the word. The husband, being a bread-winner, would invariably stay away from home, hence he should entrust the domestic or household duties to the wife who should be considered as the home economic-administrator. The provision of befitting ornaments to the wife should be symbolic of the husband's love, care and attention showered on the wife. This symbolic gesture has gone on from time immemorial.

With regard to the manner as to how a wife should minister to the needs of a husband, the Buddha advised that the wife should be proficient in her household duties, she should accord cordial hospitality to her husband's relatives and friends, she should be faithful to her husband, she should protect and conserve what her husband earns, and she should show skill and diligence in all her duties.

It will be observed that in accordance with the list of duties a wife is expected to perform to meet the needs of a husband, a wife should not be treated as merely a natural or feminine gift to her husband, but should be treated as a partner of equal standing in a delightful relationship that should be nurtured reciprocally by both parties in a spirit of sincere loyalty, gentleness and devoted dedication to one another.

Many present day families have been broken due to the inability of the wife to run a home properly, her hostility towards her husband's relations and friends, infidelity and the inordinate squandering of the husband's hard-earned savings hence the guidelines given by the Buddha to both husbands and wives, should be honoured and respected by all who treasure and value our happy and ethical family relationships. Of course some of these injunctions given such a long time ago, could be re-construed to be compatible with the needs of the modern society.

Family Ties

The Buddha's compassion saw to it that no being exists alone. The world community is a society, of beings utterly dependent upon one another. We can do nothing unless we are committed to each other. As human beings we are unique in our ability to see and do what is good and shun what is bad. We can choose to realise this in our speech and action. We are able to develop our inner purity and strength to give, in all our relationships, what is needed by others. We can create a safe and serene society in which we grow.

The basis of all human society is the intricate relationship between parent and child. A mother's duty is to love, care and protect the child, even at extreme cost. This is the *self-sacrifising* love that the Buddha taught. It is practical, caring and generous and it is selfless.

Buddhists are taught that the parents care for the child as the earth itself cares for all the plants and creatures. To be filial to the parents and to show respect and care for them, is one of the noblest spiritual obligations that a child could shower on his parents. This is a fundamental relationship that cannot be ignored. If we give, we give unselfishly, without counting the cost, yet we should give wisely – both as children and parents. Mutual love and respect should be cherished above all things. Loving kindness is taught by the Buddha as the highest human feeling. All beings live in a world where none can survive without supporting and being supported by others. This is a disciplined and practical way of life for all.

In His discourses, the Buddha has listed certain primary duties and functions as essential guide-lines for parents to observe. One of the primary guide-lines would be, by precept, practise and action, to lead the children away from things that are evil and through gentle persuasion, to guide them to do all that is good for the family, for society and for the country. In this connection, parents would have to exercise great care in dealing with their children. It is not what the parents profess but what they really are and do, that the child absorbs unconsciously and lovingly. The child's entry to the world is moulded by emulating parental behaviour. It follows that good begets good and evil begets evil.

A child should be taught to be unselfish and to be able to rejoice in the welfare and well-being of others. They should be guided to resist any impulse that tends to harm others by cruelty, anger or hatred. A child should learn to honour other people's rights and to

protect his own, yet be generous enough to be charitable and to give freely and wisely. A child should be shown the way to be honourable and pure in word and deed in all relationships and to uphold fidelity as a virtue to be prized. He should respect and honour the traditional values cherished by a family and should never give way to temptation or seduction that might disrupt the sanctity of a family. In speech and action, a child should be truthful, polite, kind, just and sensible. With such attributes, a child would definitely be an asset to society. A child should be guided to show respect for the aged and towards authority, not out of fear but out of sense of obligation and duty.

As the child grows up, it is the duty of the parents to provide him with a suitable education intellectually and spiritually, to enable him to cope with the challenges of the world that he would be facing as an adult. Coming to adulthood, the age-old parental duty would be to find a suitable wife for the grown up child. This was the tradition that existed long ago. However with the passage of time and in accordance with modern trends, such parental duties have been eroded to a great extent in that it is now customary for the present day young man to look for his own life-partner. The highest gift a man can earn is a good wife.

One other guide-line enunciated by the Buddha is that the parents should hand over, at an appropriate time, their inheritance to their children. This question of inheritance should definitely be a welcome tradition that no young man is likely to reject but would look forward to with keen and happy anticipation to play a leading role in the family and in society.

Apart from the guide-lines given in regard to parental duties towards their children, the Buddha has enunciated some useful injunctions or obligations that the children should uphold in respect of their relationships to their parents. The parents, after completing their parental duties and functions towards their children, would, in due time, retire or withdraw from the active scene as dictated by nature through old-age or other incapabilities. By a gradual process of evolution and smooth handing over, the child would assume the mantle of responsibility by taking over the onerous family duties from the aged parents, to continue with the family tradition, from one generation to another. In this respect, the young adult who has assumed his new functions, should remember that one of his prime obligations is to care, look after, support and provide for the daily needs of his aged parents. Just as parents have provided for them in their young days, it is now the duty of the young adults to render their filial duties to their parents and to maintain honourable family traditions, by skill and diligence, guarding carefully the family inheritance for the good and well-being of all in the family. The young adult should act in such a manner as to gain respect and to be worthy of his inheritance. The duties towards parents should continue, even if the parents are no more alive in that a child is expected to perpetuate the name of the parents in the performance of certain spiritual obligations.

The relationship between a child and a parent, husband and wife, student and teacher, friend and companion, are relationships that should be developed gradually, not by force or coercion but by generosity and accommodation, not by threat or harsh words, but by politeness and kindness, followed by soft and gentle speech, in a life of dedication and devoted service for the well-being of one another. The tranquility of the mind arises from purity of word, action and thought, and clarity of compassionate understanding arises from unshakeable tranquility. These are basic essentials for a happy family and a happy society.

Relationship between a layman and a Monk

The relationship between a layman and a monk, who is a religious teacher or spiritual adviser, is more or less the same as that existing in the family – one of inter-dependence. The layman depends on the monk for spiritual guidance and advice and the monk who has devoted his whole life to preserving and teaching the Noble Doctrine, depends on the material support of the layman for his day-to-day sustenance. A lay Buddhist who honours the Dhamma, is duty bound, to extend that honour and respect to the monk who is his religious teacher and who is a member of the Sangha community. The religious leader, in turn looks after the spiritual well being of the layman and his family. Such a relationship is developed not through force or compulsion, but through a spirit of common understanding and loving kindness. This is a disciplined and practical way of life which has sustained Buddhism for so many centuries. This practical way of life has been nurtured through the noble Teachings of the Lord Buddha and through the tranquility of the mind arising from purity of word, action and thought. It should be sustained for many more centuries to come.

Employee and Employer Relationship

The employer in his relationship with his servant should be generous and not stingy. The employer should treat his servant as a human being needing sympathy and understanding. He should not be cruel and domineering in dealing with his servant. By being kind and gentle to the servant, the employer would evoke better and happier responses than by being harsh and demanding. The employer, being a person of superior standing and intelligence, should indicate, by word and action that he is a gentleman in every sense of the word and should not ill-treat his servant in any way. The servant, in his relationship with the employer should always be humble, respectful and polite. He should carry out his duties deligently, irrespective of whether the employer is present or otherwise. He should take good care of the employer's property in a similar manner as guarding his own. A servant should not speak ill of his employer but should hold the employer in high regard. Mutual respect between an employer and employee should promote a peaceful and harmonious working atmosphere for the benefit of all concerned.

Friendship

On the subject of friends and associates, the Buddha, in His wisdom, has also advised His followers to be selective and discriminating in that one should not be found to be associating with undesirable elements that might lead a person to deviate from the proper path taught by the Buddha. Knowing the frailties and weaknesses of human nature, the Buddha realised that there are good and bad elements in a human society and that if we are to remain good Buddhists we should avoid bad company. By being in bad company would mean associating with habitual drunkards and drug addicts, adulterers, gamblers, cheats, people of ill-repute and people who resort to violence on the slightest pretext. Just like rotten a apple that would contaminate the good ones, the rotten apple should be isolated before it begins to do any damage.

Whilst advising His followers to shun evil company, the Buddha also indicated the type of people whom we should cultivate as friends. The classic saying " A friend in need is a friend indeed" describes aptly the qualification of a good friend. A good friend is one who maintains the same respect and cordiality either in success or in failure. A good friend is also one who rejoices at the success of his companion whilst offering sympathy in times

of adversity. A good friend is a social asset who should be nurtured and cultivated for mutual well-being and benefit of both parties.

In the choice of our friends, we are asked to exercise care against flatterers, those who try to embellish one's ego in order to gain some benefit. We should also keep a distance from those so-called friends whose words are different from their deeds and those who follow only a "one way traffic" system, that is to receive only, but not to give.

Elsewhere in this booklet, the subject of drunkards and people who are prone to unseemly sexual behaviour, has already been touched upon. Gambling which is normally thought to be a modern day evil, has apparently been in vogue for a long time, hence the advice by the Buddha, to steer away from this particular evil. Fortunes, which have taken years accumulate and save, have been lost at casinos and gambling dens. Husbands and wives have become estranged because of undue indulgence by either party at gambling sessions. Housekeeping money and jewellery which are family heir-looms, have disappeared because of gambling commitments. Apart from the drug menace, gambling can be classed as one of the serious evils that should be avoided if one values one's integrity in a family or society.

Relationship between pupils and teachers

The prime duty of a pupil is to honour and respect his teacher who is always to be held in high esteem. A pupil must be diligent and attentive in absorbing the teachings imparted to him by the teacher. Without diligence and attentiveness, the pupil would not be able to progress in his studies. It is also the duty of a pupil to render whatever little service he can perform in the class, to be of assistance to the teacher and to put into actual practice whatever ethical lessons he has learnt from the teacher. A pupil is expected to show at all times, politeness in his dealings with his teacher.

A teacher is expected to do his utmost in imparting his knowledge to his pupil, as the pupil depends solely on the capability of a teacher. The teacher is expected to be clear and lucid in his explanation so that he can be easily understood by the pupil. Apart from imparting knowledge, the teacher is also expected to guide the pupil is his behaviour morally and ethically.

The development of a happy and successful relationship between a pupil and a teacher can be achieved by a kind and gentle approach on the part of the teacher exercising patience, tolerance and understanding.

The purpose of this booklet is to show how Buddhism, if correctly understood and properly followed, can make the human race more noble and dignified. Buddhism has always been a very practical religion which teaches a man how to behave in relation to those who live around him. It teaches man not to seek to satisfy his selfish desires only but to practise generosity: to receive help and to be prepared to give help: to be grateful and to act without expecting rewards. If Buddhist principles are absorbed by modern society, we can yet make the human race respectable and worthy of emulation.

Buddhism and social welfare

Those who think that Buddhism is interested only in lofty ideals, high moral and philosophical thought, and ignores any social and economic welfare of people, are wrong. The Buddha was interested in the happiness of men. To him happiness was not

possible without leading a pure life based on moral and spiritual principles. But he knew that leading such a life was hard in unfavourable material and social conditions.

Buddhism does not consider material welfare as an end in itself; it is only a means to an end – a higher and nobler end. But it is a means which is indispensable, indispensable in achieving a higher purpose for man's happiness. So Buddhism recognizes the need of certain minimum material conditions favourable to spiritual success – even that of a monk engaged in meditation in some solitary place.

(Ven. Dr. W. Rahula)

Social and moral code

The most important element of the Buddhist reform has always been its social and moral code. The moral code taken by itself is one of the most perfect which the world has ever known. On this point all testimonials from hostile and friendly quarters agree; philosophers there may have been, religious preachers, subtle meta-physicists, disputants there may have been, but where shall we find such incarnation of love, love that knows no distinction of caste and creed and colour, a love that over-flowed even the bound of humanity, that embraced the whole of sentient beings in its sweep, a love that embodied as the gospel of universal 'Maitri' and Ahimsa.

(Prof. Max Muller, a German Scholar)

Morality is based on freedom

Buddhists morality is based on freedom i.e. on individual development. It is therefore relative. In fact there cannot be any morality nor any ethical principle if there is compulsion or determination from an agent outside ourselves.

(Anagarika B. Govinda, a German Scholar)

His Utterances Are Fresh and Practicable

"The Buddha's doctrine of love and good-will between man and man is here set forth in domestic and social ethics with more comprehensive detail than elsewhere…And truly we may say even now of this *vinaya*, or code of discipline, so fundamental are the human interests involved, so same and wide is the wisdom that envisages them, that the utterances are as fresh and practically as binding today and here as they were then in India. "Happy would have been the village or the clan on the banks of the Ganges, where the people were full of the kindly spirit of fellow feeling, the noble spirit of justice which breathes through these naïve and simple sayings".

(Prof. Rhys Davids)

Knowledge and morality

In Buddhism there can be no real morality without the knowledge, no real knowledge without morality; both are bound up together like heat and light in a flame. What constitutes "Bodhi" is not mere intellectual, enlightenment but humanity. These consciousness of moral excellence is of the very essence of "Bodhi".

(Bhikkhu Dhammapla)